

Maysie Duffin put music into the lives of others

BY WINNIE SHINN
for the Post-Record

"The nicest part of growing up in a small town is that you know 'most everyone," Maysie Duffin, a Camas native, says. "And Camas was a very small town when I was young."

Washington State was also young when Duffin was born in 1904. Like other communities that sprang up throughout Washington Territory, Camas gave a sense of belonging to its residents, who in turn felt a strong sense of concern for each other.

Duffin is still living in the house her parents had built on N.E. Birch Street 75 years ago. The youngest of four children, she was given the name Ella Maye, but has always been known as Maysie. The other children were Leila, Charles and Marjorie. Their parents met and married in Camas though both were born overseas, Elizabeth McMaster in Glasgow, Scotland, and Allan Duffin in Belfast, Ireland.

The Irish lad, working in the McMaster merchandise store downtown, fell in love with the young, intelligent Elizabeth, who was the first school teacher in Camas. She was also the sister of Hugh McMaster, the son of Aeneas McMaster, who not only started the McMaster store, but also with his wife, gathered a few folks together to start a Presbyterian church, which has played a significant part in Maysie Duffin's life. Their first church building was on Division Street below the mill ditch, where an electrical substation is now located.

The present St. John's



MAYSIE DUFFIN

Presbyterian Church building is a next door neighbor of Duffin, who was the church organist there for over 30 years. Her love of music started as a child when she took piano lessons from her elder sister Leila and later from the town's principal piano teacher, Frances "Fanny" Douglas, who was noted for her strictness as well as for her competence.

"Music has been my main interest in life all through the years," Duffin says. "I got to do so many things and met so many interesting people because of my music." In high school she played for assemblies, and was the accompanist for all music programs, including the operettas the school

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